

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4003

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Brief Description: Requesting the abolition of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Sponsors: Representatives Chase, Morris and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/19/07, 2/22/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requests the United States Congress and the President of the United States to abolish the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and that no fees be imposed on federal lands within Washington under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Blake, Vice Chair; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eickmeyer, Grant, Lantz, McCoy, Newhouse, Strow and VanDeWege.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Hailey and Orcutt.

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) was enacted on December 8, 2004 as an appropriations rider on the 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. The FLREA provides agencies with recreation fee authority for 10 years.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Federal land management agencies must meet certain criteria in order to charge recreation fees. Public involvement and advance notice are required before establishing new recreation fee areas.

The local recreation area receives no less than 80 percent of all fees collected at that unit. The balance of the receipts is distributed to the relative agency for general distribution.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The United States Congress and the President of the United States should abolish the FLREA and not require fees to be paid on federal lands within Washington under the FLREA.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

This bill includes equestrian use as part of the recreational activities on public lands.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The FLREA ultimately privatizes our public lands. The FLREA may lead to closing public lands if they are not profitable. Current taxes should pay for the operation and maintenance of our public lands, not extra fees that could be considered a double taxation. The FLREA discourages volunteerism and public lands visitation. Increased fees for public access limits recreational opportunities. Many public lands that should not be fee-generating under the FLREA are charging access fees. Payment of fees is detrimental to fair and equitable access to public lands. Access to public lands may only be available to the wealthy in the future. Studies show that lower-income families are not able to visit public lands because of fees.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Chase, prime sponsor; John Fox; Laurel Menoche, Western Slope No Fee Coalition; Robert Brook; and Ed Owens, Hunters Heritage Council, Safari Club International, and Western Slope No Fee Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.